

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

April 11, 2003

President George W. Bush
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Mr. President,

We are deeply troubled by recent reports that some in your Administration are seeking to delay presentation to Congress of the U.S.-Chile Free Trade Agreement due to Chile's failure to support the U.S. position on Iraq in the U.N. Security Council. In our view, this would be a tremendous mistake.


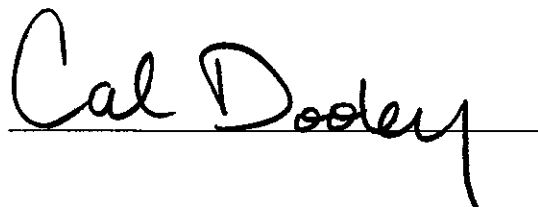
Negotiations to reach a free trade agreement with Chile were arduous and lengthy. President Clinton began these negotiations because it was in the best interests of U.S. companies, farmers, and workers to gain greater access to Chile's growing markets, particularly given the free access already enjoyed by our largest competitors. To delay signing the agreement because of other foreign policy disagreements, no matter how important, would send terribly counterproductive messages – that liberalized trade is neither a desirable end in itself nor a more effective means to strengthen our international alliances.

At home, failing to push the agreement forward would only hurt the same companies, farmers, and workers who so desperately need the opportunities this free trade agreement would give them. To our friends abroad, holding up the agreement would undermine our longer-term objectives by announcing to the world the U.S. is not serious about steering the global economy back onto the path of greater integration and truly free markets. This is not an announcement the U.S. can afford to make.

At the same time, Congress has a great deal of work to do before this agreement can come to a vote. Drafting implementing legislation, working through the committee processes, and building bipartisan support for this agreement will take time. The sooner this agreement is signed, the sooner we can begin that important work.

Mr. President, as pro-trade Democrats, we have worked hard to build a bipartisan consensus for trade agreements. Last year, we worked hard to renew your trade negotiating authority. With this great victory, the U.S. continues to lead the way as the true voice for free trade. Let us not forfeit this victory. We urge you to move ahead with the U.S.-Chile Free Trade Agreement.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Max Baucus in black ink, written over a horizontal line.Handwritten signature of Cal Dooley in black ink, written over a horizontal line.

E. Benjamin Nelson
Tom F. Kelly
Jim Owens

Tom J. Jefferson
Paul G.
W. Cyde